



# Employee Conduct, Accountability and Ethics in the Workplace

A Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff at Northern Illinois University



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Human Resource Services**

*Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost*

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## A Message from the President



As Northern Illinois University's chief executive officer, I am responsible for ensuring that our university is a good steward of the public funds allocated to our institution. From my first day as acting president of NIU, I have emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency.

It is important for all of us to put these values into practice in order to build confidence and trust throughout our community. It is the responsibility of every university employee to ensure that university funds are prudently used to advance our mission and to promote the academic success of our students. In addition, we share the responsibility for creating and sustaining a culture of mutual respect.

This booklet will help you do just that. It summarizes a wide range of policy statements, rules and regulations from federal, state and university sources. All of these standards and legal requirements relate directly to the work and professional responsibilities of every employee at NIU.

The information covers nearly two dozen topics related to employee conduct, from proper handling of cash and workplace civility to grievance procedures and acceptable use of computer resources. In each instance, you will find a general overview of the topic and links to more specific information. This booklet also provides links to procedure manuals, our university constitution and bylaws, employee handbooks and a host of other resources to help you ensure that your actions are always honorable.

I know that we all are busy, but I urge you to take a few minutes to scan this document to learn which areas apply to you, and then to delve more deeply into the applicable resources. Being aware of and following these regulations will help us demonstrate to all we serve that we are responsible with our resources and that we uphold the highest ethical standards at all times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lisa Freeman".

Lisa Freeman  
Acting President  
Northern Illinois University

## Introduction

This reference guide is informational and intended to assist employees by providing an overview of established policies, regulations and legal requirements that exist as both standards of conduct and conditions of employment for Northern Illinois University faculty, staff and student employees. Detailed information concerning these policies can be obtained from various sources, including the links contained in this publication, Human Resource Services and the different resource offices listed in this publication. This guide is not to be regarded as a binding legal document or contract independent of the standards articulated in other relevant employer publications.

A very wide range of policies and standards apply to your employment at Northern Illinois University. The policies and regulations referred to in this reference guide are sorted among five primary categories:

- Employee Conduct and Ethics.
- Stewardship of University Resources.
- Conflicts of Interest.
- Employee Rights, Due Process, Grievance and Complaint Procedures.
- Resources for Assistance.

All faculty, staff and student employees are responsible for being aware of these policies, conditions of employment and standards of performance. While the university organization is very complex, with a great variety of employee roles and college/operating unit environments, the conditions of employment outlined in this reference guide apply consistently to all university employees. Clearly, it is the responsibility of every employee to ensure that these policies and regulations are maintained throughout all aspects of work and professional service in an employment capacity. Beyond the individual, the university community, divisions, colleges, departments, operating units and participating employees all have a shared responsibility to uphold these standards and requirements as shared participants and members of the university organization.

This reference guide also contains contacts, referral sources and procedures for the reporting of information should you experience or become aware of violations of university policies. This guide will be frequently updated, is subject to revision and is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation. For greater detail and to review the actual policy references, please access the websites listed in the guide, the QR (Quick Response) code at the top of each page and/or contact Human Resource Services. Thank you for your attention to these important policies.

## Complaints

An ethics or whistleblower complaint can be forwarded through a variety of channels, including the following:

- Email [NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu](mailto:NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu)
- Call **855-544-6665** and leave message.
- Ethics Complaint Form (obtained from the Ethics website at [niu.edu/ethics/ethics\\_officer.shtml/](http://niu.edu/ethics/ethics_officer.shtml/) or Human Resource Services).

An ethics complaint may be submitted to either the University Ethics Officer and/or the Office of the Executive Inspector General:

**James Guagliardo, Ethics Officer  
Special Assistant Counsel**

Altgeld Hall 330  
DeKalb, IL 60115

[NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu](mailto:NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu)

Phone: 815-753-9517

Fax: 815-753-7818

**Office of Executive Inspector General  
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor**

69 W. Washington Street #3400

Chicago, IL 60602

Phone: 312-814-5600

Fax: 312-814-5479

Anonymous complaints will be accepted but should contain sufficient information to allow for follow-up inquiries and investigation as appropriate.

## Employment and Serving as a Representative of the University Community

In all of their many capacities, employees serve as ambassadors and representatives of the university organization. Whether in the classroom, department, committees, professional meetings, conferences, interviews, interactions with external constituencies or providing services/information to students and public communities, all are examples of important aspects of an employee's scope of work and representation of the university. Simultaneously, all faculty, staff and student employees in any capacity are required to be aware of and maintain compliance with the applicable laws, contract requirements, policies, regulations, procedures and standards of conduct, including those outlined in the "Employee Conduct, Accountability and Ethics in the Workplace: A Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff."



# Employee Conduct and Ethics - Generally

Several policy standards apply to the broad category of Employee Conduct and Ethics. In any employment capacity, individual employees may interact with one another, the organization, students, external communities, representatives of other organizations, stakeholders and public officials on a daily basis. In these respective contexts, employees make decisions and take actions every day that relate to the standards of conduct outlined in these policy references. All of these actions reflect the integrity of the NIU organization.

## Conditions of Employment

In accordance with NIU Board of Trustees Regulations, all employees are responsible for compliance with applicable state and federal laws, university policies set forth by the NIU Board of Trustees, and those set forth by the president or designee.

### Policy References:

#### Faculty and Administrative Employees

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml#anchor803627](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml#anchor803627)

#### Operating Staff (civil service) Employees

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIII.shtml#anchor944771](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIII.shtml#anchor944771)

#### Graduate Assistant Employees

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIV.shtml#anchor1011973](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIV.shtml#anchor1011973)

[niu.edu/provost/policies/index.asp#IV](http://niu.edu/provost/policies/index.asp#IV)

#### Student Employees

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIV.shtml#anchor1011973](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIV.shtml#anchor1011973)

## State Officials and Employees Ethics Act

### State Officials and Employees Ethics Act PA 93-0617: Program for Compliance

The State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (SOEEA) requires the Illinois public university governing boards, in coordination with the Illinois Board of Higher Education, to demonstrate they have adopted and implemented, for all employees under their respective jurisdiction and control, specific personnel policies relating to: (a) Political activity associated with publicly supported work time or resources; (b) Documentation of time worked; (c) Documentation for reimbursement of authorized travel expenses while on official state business; (d) Compensation and the earning or accrual of state benefits for all state employees who may be eligible to receive those benefits; and (e) Required annual state ethics training programs.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/ethics\\_act.shtml](http://niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/ethics_act.shtml)

## Gift Ban

Most gifts to state officials and employees are banned by Article 10 of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (SOEEA). SOEEA prohibits constitutional officers, members of a government body and government employees (and their spouses and immediate family living with them) from receiving any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance or other tangible or nontangible item having monetary value from a prohibited source, with exceptions.

### Policy Reference:

[ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=2529&ChapterID=2](http://ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=2529&ChapterID=2)  
[see Article 10]

## “Whistleblower” Protections/Disclosure of Wrongful Conduct

This notice informs employees of their rights and protection from retaliation under the Whistleblower Protection article of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/15. The notice provides that employees are protected from retaliation if they disclose or threaten to disclose an act or omission that the employee reasonably believes violated a law, rule or regulation. It further protects employees if they provide information to or testify before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into a violation of a law, rule or regulation, or assists/participates in a proceeding to enforce the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

### Policy Reference:

[ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=2529&ChapterID=2](http://ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=2529&ChapterID=2)  
[see Article 15]

## Political Activity

The NIU Board of Trustees Regulations establish policies pertaining to political activity in relation to publicly supported work time or resources. Individuals cannot use their relationship with the NIU Board of Trustees or the university to: “(a) Coerce, command, advise or solicit anyone to pay, lend or contribute money or other thing of value to any partisan party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes; and (b) Use board or university funds, resources or time for any political candidate or partisan purpose other than educational.”

### Policy References:

#### Faculty and Administrative Employees

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml)

#### Operating Staff (civil service) Employees

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIII.shtml)

# Employee Conduct and Ethics - Generally (continued)

## Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Prevention

### Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance (AAEC) Nondiscrimination/Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Employees and Students.

AAEC and university policies prohibit harassment and discrimination in employment or education on the basis of sex, religion, national origin, race, color, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, victims or perceived victims of domestic or sexual violence, or any other factor not related to professional qualifications, as mandated by state laws, federal laws and university policy. The policy also outlines the complaint and investigation processes.

#### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/aaec/\\_pdf/Non-Discrimination-Harassment-Policy-Procedures\\_updated-cover.pdf](http://niu.edu/aaec/_pdf/Non-Discrimination-Harassment-Policy-Procedures_updated-cover.pdf)

## Professional Behavior and Representation of University Interests

### Statement on Professional Behavior of Employees

Pursuant to the Statement on Professional Behavior of Faculty; students, faculty, administrators and trustees have an obligation to respect the dignity of others; to acknowledge their right to express differing opinions; and to foster and define intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction, and free expression on and off campus.

#### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/II22.shtml](http://niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/II22.shtml)

### Statement of Professional Ethics - Faculty

The Faculty Statement of Professional Ethics reflects the standards and obligations of faculty at Northern Illinois University. The Statement of Professional Ethics was established by the faculty and adopted by the University Faculty Senate.

#### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/ii23.shtml](http://niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/ii23.shtml)

### Statement of Professional Ethics - Supportive Professional Staff

The Statement of Professional Ethics for Members of the Supportive Professional Staff reflects the standards of professional conduct. The Statement of Professional Ethics for Members of the Supportive Professional Staff was established by the Supportive Professional Staff Council.

#### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/spsc/resources/ethics.pdf](http://niu.edu/spsc/resources/ethics.pdf)

## Professional Conduct Standards for Operating Staff

Conduct standards for Operating Staff reflect policies outlined in the Statute and Rules of the State Universities Civil Service System, as well as NIU policies. The rules address a variety of topics, including the treatment of other employees, the acceptance of personal gifts, outside employment that may conflict with an employee's responsibilities to the university and solicitation for organization memberships and/or funds.

#### Policy Reference:

Procedures Manual, Section 7-18

## Discipline – Operating Staff

Operating Staff Discipline guidelines provide a general statement regarding progressive discipline as it relates to non-negotiated operating staff (civil service) employees.

#### Policy Reference:

[hr.niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/handbooks/operating-staff.shtml](http://hr.niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/handbooks/operating-staff.shtml)

## State Universities Civil Service System Statute and Rules

The State Universities Civil Service System Statute and Rules are applicable to operating staff (civil service) employees. Section 250.110(d) describes some of the offenses that justify disciplinary suspensions. Section 250.110(e) describes the offenses that justify discharge and prescribes the steps the university must take to discharge an employee from the university including all applicable proceedings and appeal rights afforded to the employee.

#### Policy Reference:

[succs.illinois.gov/sar.aspx?osm=c43](http://succs.illinois.gov/sar.aspx?osm=c43)

## Violence in the Workplace

The university is committed to providing employees a safe environment. The Violence in the Workplace Policy outlines the university protocols and procedures associated with the investigation, discipline and potential dismissal of individuals accused of violence in the workplace.

#### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/workplace\\_violence.shtml](http://niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/workplace_violence.shtml)

## Title IX Policy and Procedure

All members of the university, including guests and visitors, have the right to learn and work in a safest possible community and environment and to be free from all forms of sex-based misconduct, including sex discrimination, sexual harassment, hostile work environment, sexual violence and gender-based harassment. All members of the university community, visitors and guests are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe on the rights of others. This policy and procedure outlines the steps the university will follow to maintain compliance.

#### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/aaec/\\_pdf/Title-IX-Sexual-Misconduct-Policy.pdf](http://niu.edu/aaec/_pdf/Title-IX-Sexual-Misconduct-Policy.pdf)

## Employee Conduct and Ethics - Generally (continued)

### Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act

The Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act requires that all university employees have a duty to immediately report or cause a report to be made whenever they have “reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected.” At the time of hire, all employees are required to complete training and sign the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form.

**Policy Reference:**

[niu.edu/hrs/resources/forms\\_docs/downloads/mandated-reporter.pdf](http://niu.edu/hrs/resources/forms_docs/downloads/mandated-reporter.pdf)

### Fitness for Duty

#### Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act/Drug-Free Workplace Act Policy

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, and the policies of Northern Illinois University prohibit unlawful possession, use and/or distribution of controlled substances and alcohol on university property or in association with any university-related activities. This policy also provides resources and assistance for individuals who are experiencing problems with illegal drug use or alcohol. Appropriate disciplinary sanctions are also outlined for employees and students who are found to be in violation of applicable laws and policies.

**Policy Reference:**

[niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/drugfree\\_schools.shtml](http://niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/drugfree_schools.shtml)



# Stewardship of University Resources

## General Statement

University employees are to utilize university assets and resources only for authorized purposes, in accordance with applicable policies, procedures and legal standards. Unless otherwise authorized, it is a violation of university policy for any employee to receive or use university resources or property for a non-work-related or non-university purpose. Furthermore, an employee cannot be compelled by a supervisor or university official to violate university policies, regulations or legal standards.

In the event that an employee witnesses a possible violation of university policy, the situation should be discussed with their supervisor or the administrative leadership of the area involved. If there remain unresolved questions or concerns, these problems may be discussed with the applicable vice president (or designee), representatives in Human Resource Services, Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance (AAEC) and/or the University Ethics Officer. University policies are intended to protect any employee who engages in good faith disclosure of alleged wrongful conduct to a designated supervisor or university official.

University employees are responsible for acceptable use of university resources in support of the mission of the university. Employees are expected to protect the resources of the university. Northern Illinois University has several policies that cover the safeguarding of university resources.

## Information Security

This policy establishes the requirements necessary to prevent or minimize accidental or intentional unauthorized access or damage to university information resources related to potential information breaches or system outages. This policy balances the need for information security with the desire to foster an open and information-sharing atmosphere among members of the academic community. This policy applies to all university students, faculty and staff, third-party support contractors, and all others granted use of NIU information resources. This policy also puts into place procedures for reporting information breaches.

### Policy Reference:

[doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/info-security.shtml](http://doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/info-security.shtml)

## Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard

This policy outlines the policy and procedure for compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard. The policy requires that departments work with NIU Merchant Services to ensure compliance with the required standards and annual self-assessment questionnaires. Approval from NIU Merchant Services is required before a credit card merchant account can be established.

### Policy Reference:

[doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/pci.shtml](http://doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/pci.shtml)

## Acceptable Use - University Resources, Computers, Telephones and Networks

### Acceptable Use Policy - Information Technology Resources

The Acceptable Use Policy describes the acceptable use of information technology resources including the electronic communications network (NIUnet) on the NIU campus, off-campus education, research centers and the computers attached to this network. These principles and guidelines also extend to networks and information technology resources outside the university accessed through NIUnet via the internet.

### Policy Reference:

[its.niu.edu/its/policies/au.shtml](http://its.niu.edu/its/policies/au.shtml)

### Telephone Usage Policy

The Telephone Usage Policy describes the proper use of university telephones. The use of university telephones is intended for university business. The policy further defines a business call and outlines the university policy regarding personal phone calls during operating hours.

### Policy Reference:

[www.finfacil.niu.edu/BusProcedureManual/18-01.htm](http://www.finfacil.niu.edu/BusProcedureManual/18-01.htm)

### Networks and Electronic Mail (Email) Policy

The Email Policy describes the acceptable use of the university's email system. The policy identifies the approval levels for mass mailings and details unacceptable uses of the university email system. The policy also notes that, under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), electronic files are considered the same as paper files. Any official university documents (as defined by law) in the files of employees of the State of Illinois are considered public documents and may be subject to inspection through FOIA, unless exempted by law.

### Policy Reference:

[doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/email.shtml](http://doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/email.shtml)

### System Access and Security Policy (SASP) for Users of Administrative Workstations

The System Access and Security Policy (SASP) details the guidelines that all employees are expected to follow when using Northern Illinois University computer systems and networks. It discusses the confidential nature of the information employees can access, the downloading of software packages that will impact university operations, accuracy and integrity of data, general user responsibilities, department and supervisor responsibilities, and the consequences for noncompliance.

### Policy Reference:

[doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/sasp.shtml](http://doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/sasp.shtml)

# Stewardship of University Resources (continued)

## Website Privacy Policy

The Website Privacy Policy acknowledges and details Northern Illinois University's policy regarding website privacy. The policy outlines the uses of NIU websites and the policy regarding the collection and sharing of supplied personal user information and data, the use of cookies (information placed automatically on visitors' computers), information provided by the user in public forums and online surveys, federal and state laws, and disclaimers.

### Policy Reference:

[doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/privacy-website.shtml](http://doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/privacy-website.shtml)

## Confidentiality - University Records and Information

University employees have access to confidential information. Employees are entrusted to protect this information in accordance with standards established by their employing departments, university policies and applicable state/federal laws. Confidentiality policies specifically address employee/student information, medical records, dissemination of confidential information and protocols for the maintenance of confidential records.

## Records Inspection Policy

Employees have certain rights and responsibilities relating to the inspection of their employment records. In accordance with Illinois Personnel Records Review Act 820 ILCS 40/0.01 et seq, the Records Inspection Policy outlines Human Resource Services' procedures regarding employee record inspection and authorization for record inspection by a designated representative.

### Policy Reference:

[www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/personnel\\_files.shtml](http://www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/personnel_files.shtml)

## Release of Student Information

In accordance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the university is prohibited from releasing student educational record information to parents or others external to the university in most circumstances. In accordance with this provision, student information is held at the strictest level of confidentiality and will only be released to persons other than the student if circumstances warrant and are authorized by this act.

### Policy Reference:

[reg.niu.edu/registration-records/about/confidentiality/index.shtml](http://reg.niu.edu/registration-records/about/confidentiality/index.shtml)

## Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Compliance

The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Compliance Policy is located in the NIU Board of Trustees Regulations. It provides a general statement about protecting individuals' personal health information, notes that the president of the university shall designate a privacy officer and directs utilization of safeguards that should be taken to protect the information.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionVII.shtml#7D](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionVII.shtml#7D)

## Illinois Identity Protection Act

The Information Security Policy for Northern Illinois University, in accordance with the Illinois Identity Protection Act, establishes the Identity Protection Policy to protect Social Security numbers from unauthorized use or disclosure. This policy is applied in conjunction with the university's existing policies and practices, as well as state and federal laws, on: (a) Protecting the confidentiality of Social Security numbers; and (b) Preventing identity theft at Northern Illinois University.

### Policy Reference:

[doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/identity.shtml](http://doit.niu.edu/doit/policies/identity.shtml)

## Red Flag Rules and Guidelines

The federal Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 Compliance Policy is located in the NIU Board of Trustees Policies. It provides information regarding the university's Identity Threat Prevention Program to detect, prevent and mitigate identity theft in connection with the opening of certain covered accounts or certain existing covered accounts.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/board/policies/red\\_flags\\_rules\\_ftc\\_091709.pdf](http://niu.edu/board/policies/red_flags_rules_ftc_091709.pdf)

## Working with Athletes

All employees who work with or interact with athletes should be aware of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) regulations. Strict adherence to all applicable governing policies, procedures and regulations of the NCAA is required and is a condition of employment.

### Policy Reference:

[niuhuskies.com/sports/2016/6/13/compliance-niu-compliance-html.aspx](http://niuhuskies.com/sports/2016/6/13/compliance-niu-compliance-html.aspx)

## Cash Handling and Fiscal Responsibilities

The university maintains a designated set of cash handling and fiscal control positions in accordance with the Campus Security Act and internal cash handling policies. A zero tolerance policy exists with respect to theft of monetary assets. The policy also addresses the borrowing and lending of money between supervisors and employees in cash control positions and gifts exceeding \$100 in value.

## Fraud Detection and Prevention

The NIU Fraud Detection and Prevention Policy is a global policy regarding the detection and prevention of fraud at Northern Illinois University. Management is responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud, misappropriations and other irregularities. Fraud is defined as the intentional, false representation or concealment of a material fact for the purpose of inducing another to act upon it to their injury. Each member of the management team will be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indication of irregularity.

# Conflicts of Interest

## Disclosure of Economic Interests

The NIU policy for Disclosure of Economic Interests is contained in the NIU Board of Trustees Regulations and is also governed by two Illinois statutes; the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act and the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, PA 93-0617 (SOEEA). The Illinois Governmental Ethics Act requires specific public officers and employees of the university to file a Statement of Economic Interests by May 1 of each year. SOEEA requires these disclosures be submitted to the University Ethics Officer for review before they are filed with the Secretary of State.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml) [Section II.B.3]

## Outside Employment, Consulting or Research

### Outside Employment - Generally

Pursuant to Outside Employment standards set forth in the NIU Board of Trustee Regulations, faculty and administrative employees shall not be employed under any employment or regular agreements or contracts for more than normal full-time employment from the state of Illinois. Exceptions may be granted in the case of faculty teaching extension or noncredit courses, or other circumstances when duties are performed in addition to the regular appointment. The president or designee shall authorize in writing those persons designated to approve outside employment.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml) [Section II.B.2]

### Outside Consulting or Research

In accordance with the University Faculty Research and Consulting Act, full-time faculty members must have prior written approval by the president or a designee to perform research or provide consulting services to nongovernmental agencies.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml) [Section II.B.2]

## Academic and Research Integrity

### Research Integrity at Northern Illinois University

The Research Integrity Policy addresses the issue of research misconduct. Examples of intentional research misconduct include falsification of data, improper assignment of authorship, claiming research as one's own, plagiarism, manipulation of experiments and statistical or analytical data, and misappropriation of research funds. This policy outlines the confidential review and investigation process that is undertaken when an allegation of research misconduct is filed.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/12.shtml](http://niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/12.shtml)

## Family Relationships

Pursuant to NIU Board of Trustees Regulations, all employees are selected for employment and promotion without regard to relationship by blood or marriage in accordance with appropriate qualifications for the performance of specified duties. However, no individual shall initiate or participate in personnel decisions involving initial employment, retention, promotion, salary, leave of absence or other direct benefit to an individual employee who is a member of the same immediate family or immediate household. Immediate family includes an employee's spouse, parents, brothers, sisters and children.

### Policy References:

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml) [Section II.A.8]

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIII.shtml](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionIII.shtml) [Section III.A.5]

## Consensual Relationships, Conflicts of Interest and Assumption of Risk

The university Nondiscrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy outlines the conflicts of interest and assumptions of risk that may arise with adult romantic consensual relationships. The policy describes the inherent power differential that exists when personal relationships develop between supervisors and employees or faculty/staff and students. Consensual personal relationships involving a power differential risk becoming violations of university policy and equal opportunity law. Consensual personal relationships, whether a power differential is involved, that affect or result in the perception of interference with the working or learning environment may be treated as an employment/academic performance issue. Individuals who enter into these relationships unavoidably do so at their own personal hazard and assume all related personal risks.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/aaec/\\_pdf/Non-Discrimination-Harassment-Policy-Procedures\\_updated-cover.pdf](http://niu.edu/aaec/_pdf/Non-Discrimination-Harassment-Policy-Procedures_updated-cover.pdf)

# Employee Rights, Due Process, Grievance and Complaint Procedures

NIU employees have the right to be free from acts/experiences of discrimination, harassment or retaliation in the workplace, as well as the right to file a complaint and/or to be provided notice about complaints. Any employee or student who experiences and/or witnesses possible violations of laws, policies, regulations, acts of discrimination, harassment or retaliation has the right and responsibility to immediately report this activity to the applicable university administrator, to appropriate officials in HRS or other campus resource offices, or to the office of Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance (AAEC). All complaints and/or allegations of misconduct or discrimination will be examined in a reasonable, objective and expedient manner in accordance with applicable federal/state employment laws and university procedures.

## Grievance Procedures for Faculty and Staff

The university's grievance procedure is intended to provide recourse for allegations of inappropriate treatment or the misapplication of policies. The procedures provide an orderly disposition of disputes and facilitate reasonable resolution of issues that are presented. This grievance procedure is not applicable to employees who are members of one of the university's collective bargaining units. Negotiated employees are limited to filing a grievance in accordance with their respective collective bargaining agreements and AAEC complaint procedures.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/u\\_council/constitution/bylaws/article11.shtml](http://niu.edu/u_council/constitution/bylaws/article11.shtml)

## Grievance Procedures for Members of the Supportive Professional Staff

The Supportive Professional Staff (SPS) grievance procedures afford SPS employees an appeal for certain employment-related decisions that are not subject to the Grievance Procedures for Faculty and Staff mentioned earlier in this reference guide. Pursuant to these procedures, SPS employees may appeal employment decisions including, but not limited to, dismissal for cause; official reprimands; arbitrary and capricious decisions related to benefits, working conditions and performance evaluations; nonrenewal of an employment contract; and irreconcilable salary disagreements.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/III5.shtml](http://niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/III5.shtml)

## Due Process

Due process measures for faculty are outlined in the NIU Constitution and Bylaws. These procedures outline the process for the resolution of questions resulting from the dismissal of a tenured or nontenured member of the faculty.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/u\\_council/constitution/bylaws/article07.shtml](http://niu.edu/u_council/constitution/bylaws/article07.shtml)

## Grievance Procedures for Violations of Academic Freedom

The Grievance Procedures for Violations of Academic Freedom provide faculty with the opportunity to seek adjudication of claims or violations of their academic freedom by members of the university. The procedures outline the duties and responsibilities of each party and the steps that will be taken to resolve such claims.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/u\\_council/constitution/bylaws/article10.shtml](http://niu.edu/u_council/constitution/bylaws/article10.shtml)



# Employee Rights, Due Process, Grievance and Complaint Procedures (continued)

## Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance - Investigation Procedures

Following the filing of a formal complaint pursuant to published procedures, AAEC will review the situation and may conduct an investigation to determine if sufficient evidence appears to exist to substantiate that a violation of the Nondiscrimination and Harassment Policy has occurred. If the investigation determines there was an apparent violation of the policy, corrective and/or disciplinary action may be recommended. If the investigation concludes that a violation apparently did not occur, AAEC may still recommend disciplinary or corrective action as warranted by the information contained in the complaint and/or discovered during the investigation.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/aaec/\\_pdf/Non-Discrimination-Harassment-Policy-Procedures\\_updated-cover.pdf](http://niu.edu/aaec/_pdf/Non-Discrimination-Harassment-Policy-Procedures_updated-cover.pdf)

## Workplace Civility

It is crucial for the university to ensure the right of all faculty and staff (supportive professional staff and civil service) to perform their individual and collaborative roles in an environment that is free from incivility, misuse of authority, intimidation, retaliation and infringement upon personal and academic freedoms. The Faculty and Staff Policy and Procedures outlines the procedures to provide recourse for allegations of inappropriate treatment by other faculty and staff. The policy is intended to be consistent with the Preamble to the Northern Illinois University Constitution, which declares, “Respect for

the intrinsic dignity of each member of the university community, both by the university itself and by each member of that community, is the basic cornerstone governing all community activities.” The policy and procedures provide for orderly disposition of disputes and to facilitate reasonable resolution of matters considered.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/u\\_council/constitution/bylaws/article11.shtml](http://niu.edu/u_council/constitution/bylaws/article11.shtml)

## Legal Representation and Indemnification

The NIU Board of Trustees Regulations detail the provisions of legal representation and indemnification for claims or actions against a trustee, a former trustee, an employee of the NIU Board of Trustees, former employee or estate of such person. Subject to certain conditions, defense and indemnification is provided for claims or actions based upon damage or injury allegedly arising from an act or omission occurring within the scope of duties performed on behalf of the NIU Board of Trustees. The Board Regulations further state that indemnification is provided for those who acted in good faith, without malice and within the scope of their authority. Indemnification and legal representation will not be provided for misconduct or actions that were intentional. Legal representation and indemnification is subject to the Representation and Indemnification of State Employees Act and other applicable laws.

### Policy Reference:

[niu.edu/board/regs/sectionVII.shtml#7E](http://niu.edu/board/regs/sectionVII.shtml#7E)



## University Resources for Assistance

Department	Phone	Website
Accounting	753-1514	<a href="http://niu.edu/accounting/">niu.edu/accounting/</a>
Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance (AAEC)	753-6000	<a href="http://niu.edu/aaec/">niu.edu/aaec/</a>
Community Standards and Student Conduct	753-1571	<a href="http://niu.edu/conduct/">niu.edu/conduct/</a>
Employee Assistance Office	753-9191	<a href="http://niu.edu/hrs/work_life/employee_assistance/index.shtml">niu.edu/hrs/work_life/employee_assistance/index.shtml</a>
Ethics Officer	753-9517	<a href="http://niu.edu/ethics/ethics_officer.shtml">niu.edu/ethics/ethics_officer.shtml</a>
Faculty Development Office	753-6502	<a href="http://facdev.niu.edu/facdev/">facdev.niu.edu/facdev/</a>
Human Resource Services	753-6000	<a href="http://www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/index.shtml">www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/index.shtml</a>
Division of Information Technology (DoIT)	753-8100	<a href="http://doit.niu.edu/doit/">doit.niu.edu/doit/</a>
Internal Audit	753-1827	<a href="http://niu.edu/internalaudit/index.shtml">niu.edu/internalaudit/index.shtml</a>
Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications	753-1681	<a href="http://niu.edu/marcomm/">niu.edu/marcomm/</a>
Ombudsperson	753-1414	<a href="http://niu.edu/ombuds/">niu.edu/ombuds/</a>
Procurement Services	753-1671	<a href="http://niu.edu/procurement/">niu.edu/procurement/</a>
Provost's Office	753-8387	<a href="http://niu.edu/provost/">niu.edu/provost/</a>
Registration and Records	753-0681	<a href="http://reg.niu.edu/regrec/">reg.niu.edu/regrec/</a>
University Police	753-1212	<a href="http://niu.edu/publicsafety/">niu.edu/publicsafety/</a>

## Major Policy/Procedure References

Area	Website
Academic Policies and Procedures Manual	<a href="http://niu.edu/provost/policies/index.asp">niu.edu/provost/policies/index.asp</a>
Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance (AAEC)	<a href="http://niu.edu/aaec/">niu.edu/aaec/</a>
Business Procedures Manual	<a href="http://www.finfacil.niu.edu/BusProcedureManual/">www.finfacil.niu.edu/BusProcedureManual/</a>
Central Management Services	<a href="http://illinois.gov/cms/Pages/default.aspx">illinois.gov/cms/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Human Resource Services	<a href="http://www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/index.shtml">www.hr.niu.edu/hrs/index.shtml</a>
Human Subjects in Research	<a href="http://www.research.niu.edu/divresearch/compliance/human/index.shtml">www.research.niu.edu/divresearch/compliance/human/index.shtml</a>
Illinois Compiled Statutes	<a href="http://ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs.asp">ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs.asp</a>
NIU Board of Trustees Regulations	<a href="http://niu.edu/board/regs/index.shtml">niu.edu/board/regs/index.shtml</a>
NIU Constitution and Bylaws	<a href="http://niu.edu/u_council/constitution/index.shtml">niu.edu/u_council/constitution/index.shtml</a>
Office of the Executive Inspector General	<a href="http://illinois.gov/oeig/Pages/default.aspx">illinois.gov/oeig/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Operating Staff (Civil Service) Handbook	<a href="http://niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/handbooks/operating-staff.shtml">niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/handbooks/operating-staff.shtml</a>
Public Safety	<a href="http://niu.edu/publicsafety/">niu.edu/publicsafety/</a>
State Universities Civil Service System	<a href="http://succs.illinois.gov/">succs.illinois.gov/</a>
Supportive Professional Staff (SPS) Handbook	<a href="http://niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/handbooks/sps.shtml">niu.edu/hrs/resources/policies/handbooks/sps.shtml</a>

## Ethical Prohibitions

Northern Illinois University is charged with maintaining an ethical environment for university employees and participants of the campus community. As an institutional standard, all faculty, students and administrators are expected to maintain ethical conduct as a continuing aspect of professional responsibility. NIU strictly abides by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act and the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (SOEEA). Anyone who violates applicable ethics requirements in their professional capacities as a state employee may face significant consequences, up to and including discipline and/or termination. University personnel are required to receive and complete ethics training annually and at the time of hire. Additionally, university personnel are required to report policy violations so that appropriate corrective action can be taken.

Ethical conduct and standards are outlined in university governing documents and summarized in applicable policy documents including the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act Policy and the “Employee Conduct, Accountability and Ethics in the Workplace: A Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff of Northern Illinois University.” As outlined in this guide, prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Conflicts of interest.
- Prohibited political activity.
- Inappropriate use of state time, resources and property.
- Receipt of gifts from prohibited sources.
- Procurement communications.
- “Revolving door” employment practices.

## Whistleblower Protection/Retaliation

Employees also have a duty to report violations of law, rules, regulations or policies that they become aware of in the course of their work for the state of Illinois. Northern Illinois University and the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act provide protection to persons coming forward with complaints of unethical behavior. Specifically, the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act provides that the university and its employees shall not take any retaliatory action against an employee:

- Who has disclosed or threatened to disclose that they reasonably believe there has been or will be a violation of a law, rule or regulation.
- That provides information to or testifies before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any violation of a law, rule or regulation.
- Who assists or participates in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act. 5 ILCS 430/15-10. See also, the Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174 et seq.

## Complaints

An ethics or whistleblower complaint can be forwarded through a variety of channels, including the following:

- Email [NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu](mailto:NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu)
- Call **855-544-6665** and leave message.
- Ethics Complaint Form (obtained from the Ethics website at [niu.edu/ethics/ethics\\_officer.shtml/](http://niu.edu/ethics/ethics_officer.shtml/) or Human Resource Services).

An ethics complaint may be submitted to either the University Ethics Officer and/or the Office of the Executive Inspector General:

**James Guagliardo, Ethics Officer  
Special Assistant Counsel**

Altgeld Hall 330  
DeKalb, IL 60115

[NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu](mailto:NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu)

Phone: 815-753-9517

Fax: 815-753-7818

**Office of Executive Inspector General  
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor**

69 W. Washington Street #3400

Chicago, IL 60602

Phone: 312-814-5600

Fax: 312-814-5479

Anonymous complaints will be accepted but should contain sufficient information to allow for follow-up inquiries and investigation as appropriate.